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Backyard Cottages

Southeast Seattle Neighborhood Survey Results

Introduction

On November 8, 2008, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) staff conducted a neighborhood survey in southeast Seattle to gauge awareness of, and reaction to, backyard cottages. Currently, backyard cottages are allowed only in southeast Seattle neighborhoods.

Staff approached approximately 268 single-family homes that were in the immediate vicinity of fourteen backyard cottages. Immediate vicinity was defined as homes on lots located either on the same block as the backyard cottage (both sides of the street), or on the block behind the backyard cottage (sometimes across an alley). The complete results from the 118 valid responses to the survey are listed below.

Survey Results

Overall, the survey results indicate mostly positive reactions to backyard cottages. Ninety-six respondents felt that homeowners should be allowed to build a backyard cottage on their property. Because backyard cottages are often not visible from the street, more than half the residents living near a backyard cottage weren't actually aware that one had been built. Most neighbors who knew about the backyard cottage felt it either had a positive impact or no impact on their neighborhood.

Among those aware of a backyard cottage in their neighborhood:

- 71% said that the backyard cottage in their neighborhood fit in with the surrounding homes.
- 84% noticed no impacts on parking or traffic directly related to the cottage.
- 83% were supportive or strongly supportive of backyard cottages.
- 54% would consider living in a backyard cottage themselves.
- 89% believe homeowners should be allowed to build a backyard cottage on their lot.

Response to Survey Questions

Question 1. Do you believe owners of single-family homes should be allowed to build a backyard cottage on their lot?

108 responses

YES 89%

NO 11%

Question 2. Would you or someone in your family ever consider living in a backyard cottage as a housing option?

114 responses

YES 54%

NO 46%

Question 3. Are you aware of any backyard cottages in your neighborhood?

117 responses

YES 47%
NO 53%

**Questions 4-7 were asked only if the respondent answered YES to question 3; only if they were aware of a legal backyard cottage in their neighborhood*

Question 4. Do you feel this backyard cottage has a positive or negative impact on your neighborhood?

53 responses

Positive 30% Negative 15% No Impact 55%

Question 5. Do you feel this backyard cottage has improved or decreased home values in your neighborhood?

55 responses

Increased 25% No difference 18%
Decreased 16% Don't know 40%

Question 6. Do you feel the cottage's design fits in with the neighborhood?

52 Responses

YES 71%
NO 29%

Question 7. Have you noticed any impacts on parking or traffic directly related to this cottage?

51 responses

YES 16%
NO 84%

**Question 8 was asked of people who expressed an opinion of backyard cottages, either positive or negative.*

Question 8. What is your reaction to the backyard cottage policy?

52 responses

Strongly supportive 21% Opposed 12%
Supportive 62% Strongly opposed 5%